

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd

At *Hackney*, *June* the 27th. 1714.

Being the

First L O R D's - D A Y

After the R E V E R E N D

Mr. H E N R Y's

Suddain Death in the Country.

By J. B A T E S, M. A.

L O N D O N:

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John 1:1-14

Forasmuch as I have found I go into the world

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE FIRST CHAPTER

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-14

JOHN XIV. 28.

*If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce,
because I said, I go unto the Fa-
ther.*

CH R I S T's Flock, his little and weak Flock, were now a going to lose the Society and Presence in the Flesh of the best of Pastors, and to live in a depriv'd Condition, (which, Alas! is Yours at present,) for a Time. *Ye have heard, how I said unto you, I go away,* saith our Lord to them, in the Words before the Text.

T H I S Flock lov'd their Pastor, as you have done yours, and fell to sorrowful Reflections upon their present Case and Circumstances, as being about to part with Him; with Him, who was the most edifying Preacher, the most perfect Example, the most compassionate Councillor, the most faithful Reprover, and the best Friend and Guide to Heaven. Chap. xvi. 6. *But because I have said these Things to you, i. e. spoke these Words, I go away, Sorrow hath filled your Hearts.* They lov'd their Pastor, I say, and fell into Sorrow and Tears under the Sense of his approaching Separation from them. Sighs and Tears for the Departing, or the Departed, are Evidences of Love: You'll find, when our Lord groan'd in Spirit, and was troubled, and wept over *Lazarus's* Grave, the *Jews* said, *Behold, how he loved him;* chap. xi. 33, 34, 35. Sighs, Tears, &c. are Evidences of Affection which tender Natures easily slide into, indulge themselves in, and express their Con-

cern by, even to a degree of blameable Weakness oftentimes, before they recover themselves.

BUT what doth our Blessed Lord now say, to his Sorrowing Disciples, to cheer their Hearts, and to compose and regulate their Spirits and Passions, under the Sense of this his Departure? He tells them, as in the Words of the Text, That *if they loved him, they would rejoyce*. If they loved him, *Him*, (observe the Word) and not *themselves* only, or chiefly; If they lov'd his Rest, his Glory, his going to be crown'd, rewarded and perfected, as well as, or as much as they lov'd their own Happiness, arising from seeing his Face in the Flesh, hearing his Voice, and receiving his Instructions and Consolations, they would rejoyce at his Departure: If they lov'd Him Rationally and with Discretion, then considering Him as One that had been an obedient Son to GOD, always delighting to do his Will, they would rejoyce at his going away from them, to GOD, to receive his Reward and Inheritance. They would rejoyce, he tells them, and with good Ground and Foundation, because he had said to them, *He went to the Father, i. e.* to GOD, who stood in the Relation of a Father to him, in a principal and peculiar manner: They would rejoyce at his going away, because he went to One that would be kind to him, as well as enable him to be kind to them; to One that could not but be dear and desirable to him, even dearer than he was to them, how much soever they might think that they lov'd him; to One that was greater than himself, as he speaks in the Words following the Text. *For my Father is greater than I, i. e.* He is so in Power, Glory, Blessedness, and Riches of Grace to Sinners, considering me as a Mediator. These Disciples could not but conclude, from what their Lord had said to them, if they considered it, That this his Departure from them, would certainly be Comfortable and Glorious to him,

as well as Advantageous to them, in the Issue. And could not their Selfishness afford, that he should be happy? Could they not recede from their Desire of their Pastor's Presence with them, for his own Good? Could they profess rational Love to him, and yet not let him go from an evil World, to a good one? From hard Labours, to Rest? From the Society of persecuting Enemies, into the Arms and Embraces of a Father? Would nothing satisfy them, but Christ's staying always, or a long Time at least, in this evil World, to serve and comfort them? O uneasy Love to Christ! O unfriendly Affection in these his Flock! It is the Part of true Friends to consent to that which is most for the Interest of those they love, and to deny themselves for their Advantage. But, Alas! so weak were the Disciples of Christ at this Time, and so disturb'd at the Thoughts of being left without his Presence in the Flesh, which had been highly pleasing and useful to them, that they could not come up to this Rule and Duty of Friendship, and rejoyce at his going from them to his Father and best Friend.

IN the following Discourse upon these Words, thus open'd to you, I shall take Notice of these Three Things, and insist a little upon them.

I. Of the great Friend and Patron to whom faithful Pastors retire, when they leave this World, and their respective Flocks in it: They go to the Father; to GOD the Father of All, and their Gracious Father.

II. OF the Infirmities, Passions, and natural Weaknesses, which the Flocks and Disciples of such Pastors are prone to discover, upon their leaving the World and them, and which they are apt to indulge themselves in, as Testimonies and Evidences of their Love towards them.

them. They are prone to heaviness of Spirit, Sorrow and Tears.

III. OF the rational Love, which the Flocks of Faithful Pastors ought to shew, which Christ would have had his own Flock to have shewn, and which all departed Pastors of the like Spirit, Faith, and Hope, would call theirs to shew, upon such Events or Occasions, could they come and speak to them. The rational Love, which the Flocks of Faithful Pastors, ought to shew towards such Pastors, upon their leaving this World, is Joy and Rejoycing; upon this Account, *that they go to the Father. If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, because I said, I go unto the Father.*

To enter upon the FIRST of these, The great Friend, to whom faithfull Pastors and Teachers of the Will of GOD retire, when they leave the World, and their respective Flocks in it. *They go to the Father.*

JESUS CHRIST went to the Father: He, the chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, went thither, when he left the World. And all inferior Shepherds that are his Faithful Imitators, follow him thither, and walk with him *in White*, or in Princely Ornature, as being found *worthy* and acceptable to his Father and him. In his Father's House there are many Mansions; and he hath encouraged his Disciples with the notice, that he is gone before them, to prepare a Place for them. This is a comfortable Journey which Faithful Pastors, and their Faithful People too, make, at their taking their Leave of this Earth. Where-ever they are, and whatever they are a doing, when they take this last Journey towards their Father, it proveth an happy one: Whether Travelling abroad, or Sitting at home; Whether discoursing with distant Friends, and confirming and comforting them; or conversing
with

with their nearest Neighbours. It is a comfortable Journey, whether they travel it Post, or go it slowly; whether they are set at Liberty to go it, by the quick dispatch of a sudden Disease, or by a slow-working one; whether by an Apoplexy, a Convulsion, or a lingering Consumption. At whatever Hour they are called to be gone, at Evening, Midnight, or at the Cock-crowing, or in the Morning, they are happy. Their Father hath his Arms open to receive them, and his Mouth open too to tell them, That all he hath, is theirs; his Kingdom, his Consolations, his Glory, and what not: And, they have their Hearts and Desires open and enlarged, to go to him, and drink of the Rivers of his Pleasures for evermore.

OUR LORD told his Disciples, He went to his Father and their Father, to his GOD and their GOD: And in due Time, all his Elect go after him, to experience the Bowels and Mercies of this their promised, and fore-noticed Father, who can make up the Losses of all his dutiful Children, and compensate for all the dear Relations they have left behind them, for a little while longer here on Earth. Tho' Christ's Disciples and Ministers leave a Family behind them, their Heavenly Father compensates this Loss, by putting them into his Family in Heaven, his perfect, pure, and spotless One: Tho' they leave a Wife and Children, they go where they make up a Part of the Society of *the Bride, the Lamb's Wife*, in her most Glorious Condition; and where they enjoy the Company of the general Assembly of the *First-born*: Tho' they leave Spiritual Children, their afflicted Flocks on Earth, they go, if they have been useful Ministers, as yours hath been, to the Comfortable Society of those departed Saints, to whom GOD hath made them Spiritual Fathers, and rejoyce with them in their Joy, and share with them in their Glory.

FAITHFUL

FAITHFUL Pastors go to the Father, to GOD, who is the Father, and their Father in particular. A Comfortable Word! This is a Comfortable Title, under which GOD is set forth as ready to receive the Faithful followers of his Son Jesus Christ, as well as Jesus Christ himself. *I ascend unto my Father, and your Father,* John xx. 17.

1. THIS Title holdeth forth GOD to us, as One that is loving and affectionate in his Temper. A Father without love is abominated, and reckoned a Brute, or a Monster, even among Men that are evil. And, can we think then, that GOD, the All-perfect and Spotless GOD, wanteth Love? Or falleth under such a scandalous defect? No, no: As he is set forth to his Creatures, as a Father: So he hath the Affections, Tenderneſs and Bowels that become One that standeth in ſuch a Relation. And, if Love, powerful Love, with all the Expreſſions and Maniſtations of it, can make thoſe that live, labour, and die in the LORD, happy; ſuch as do ſo, muſt be happy, when they are got to GOD. GOD will love them better than they love themſelves: He'll make them ſtand amazed at his Love. They ſhall find thoſe Words of Chriſt true to the uttermoſt, when once got home to him, *Joh. xvi. 17. My Father himſelf loveth you.*

2. THIS Title ſetteth forth GOD to us, as One from whom, thoſe that go to dwell with him, may expect all good Gifts, *Matth. vii. 9. Or what Man is there of you, whom if his Son ask Bread, will he give him a Stone? v. 11. If ye then being Evil, know how to give good Gifts to your Children, How much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven, give good Gifts to his Children?* Now, if our Heavenly Father, is a Father of Gifts, and One freer to his People, than other Fathers are to their Children,

Children, even while they are in this World ; What will He be to them, when they are gone to dwell in his Presence in Heaven ? They shall certainly inherit all Things there : By his universal, unconfined, perfect Bounty, He will shew himself to be their Father, and they shall appear to be his Sons, *Rev. xxi. 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all Things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.*

3. To add no more, This Title *Father*, setteth forth GOD, as One that must be lovely, acceptable and delightful, to all those that go out of the World to him, to dwell with him for ever. GOD the Father, to whom every good Shepherd under Christ, and all the Sheep of Christ go, for their eternal Rest and Rewards, is One, in whom they can take the utmost Pleasure, as well as One, who can take Pleasure in them ; is One whom they can love, as well as One who loveth them ; is One they cannot but praise, attribute Glory to, and fall down before, with Admiration, as well as One who will cloath them with Glory. Whoever goeth to GOD, goeth to One that he cannot but be enamoured with, and give eternal Praises to. There is that Beauty and Loveliness in his Nature and Temper, which will always inspire those that dwell in his Presence, with a Spirit of Rapture and Joy. Blessed are they that dwell in GOD's Heavenly House and Temple ; they shall be *still*, they shall be *ever* praising Him.

WHAT must I say ? To go to the Father, or to go to GOD, who is the Father of all Faithful Pastors, and of their Faithful People too, is Privilege enough. This Sentence connoteth and intimateth Happiness enough, if any can. It is expressive of more than our Eyes have seen, or our Ears heard of. It is to go to a Friend and Patron, who is an everlasting King, who

hath an everlasting Kingdom, everlasting Riches, Glory, Life, Joy, Peace, and every Thing: And, what is yet better, it is to go to One, who is communicative of all these, to those that go to dwell with him. Well might our LORD JESUS then, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, say to his Disciples and Flock, *If they loved him, they would rejoyce*; rejoyce at his going out of the World; because he went to the Father: And well may I turn the Text upon you that are Sorrowing for a Faithful Pastor, One subordinate to this great Shepherd, and that walked in his Steps, *If ye loved him, ye would rejoyce, because he is gone to the Father.*

BUT I proceed now to the SECOND Thing observable in the Text, or at least from the Tempers of his Disciples and Flock, when he spoke the Words of it to them, (*viz.*) The Infirmities and Weaknesses which the Flocks of Faithful Pastors are prone to discover, and to indulge themselves in, as Expressions and Evidences of Love to them, upon their leaving the World, and going to this great Patron and Friend, *the Father*. They are prone to give themselves up, and abandon themselves to Sorrow and Tears.

YOU may suppose, the Tears stood in the Eyes of Christ's Disciples, his little Flock, at this Time when he spoke these Words of the Text to them: You may suppose, their Hearts were heavy; that they struck upon their Thighs; that they cried out, what shall we do? what will become of us, when we are thus deprived? and that they gave forth many such outward Evidences, as these, of their Sorrow and Concern, at the Notices of Christ their Pastor's going out of the World, to his GOD and Heavenly Father. There was somewhat, yea, a great deal of this; or Christ would not have blamed their present afflicted Temper, which they gave way to. Read *chap. xvi. 5, 6.* and you'll

you'll find, They were so full of Sorrow, that they could not speak to him; nor scarce tell what he spoke to them, for Astonishment. Even forward and talkative *Peter*, was struck dumb, we may suppose; for we hear not of his opening his Mouth at this Time. Read the fore-quoted Place, *But now I go away to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whether goest thou? But because I have said these Things, Sorrow hath filled your Hearts.* As soon as these dejected Disciples of Christ, could so far throw off their Disturbance, about this Time, as to exercise calm Consideration, we may believe, their Minds work'd this way; They remembred the continued and comfortable Society they had enjoyed with this their Pastor and Master, for about Three Years together; the free Admission he gave them always to him, for the Resolution of their Doubts; the familiar and useful Instructions that daily drop'd from him, for their Edification and Establishment; the Care he took of them, the Miracles he wrought before them, the Prayers he put up for them, &c.

WE may believe, they remembred, how they had left all for him; how they had constantly appeared with him in the Face of a Persecuting World; and what enmity the *Jewish* Doctors and Rulers had expressed against him, and against them too, for following him. And, we may suppose, they now began to think, all this would fall directly and solely upon themselves, who as yet, were very unfit to grapple with it, and bear it: They having none of that Wisdom which dwelt in this their Master, to Answer their entangling Questions; no such Power as assisted him, to work Miracles for the Countenancing of the Doctrines they had imbibed from him; nor such universal Goodness as shined forth in him, wherewith to engage all, where-ever they came, by doing them kind Offices. We may believe, that they thought of

such Losses, Inconveniencies and Difficulties as these, as what were now a befalling them, from Christ's Departure from them; and wept, and sigh'd at them, without being able, as yet, to cheer their Hearts and raise their Spirits, by any of the good Words of Promise, which he had spoken to them. Sadness and Affliction, and that only, prevailed in them, at the Thoughts of his going away from them, which would, as they judged, bring all these Evils upon them.

THEY shewed their Love to their LORD, by weeping and sighing at the Thoughts of his Departure from them to Heaven, and at the Thoughts of the Consequences of it to them: Or rather, they shewed their Love to themselves, this way: For in Reality, they shewed more Love to themselves, than to him.

WEeping and sighing at the Thoughts of the Removal of a good Pastor to Heaven, doth shew forth some Love indeed: These are Evidences of Love which our Infirm Natures easily discover and abound in. But then, as I have said, there is a mixture of Self in this Love; there are great marks of Imperfection upon it: And we should shew forth greater, higher, more rational, exalted, and refined Love, at the Removal of such to GOD, if we could rejoyce at the Thoughts of their Happiness with him, and raise our Minds to expatiate upon their Eternal Pleasures, till we even felt ourselves happy in their Happiness.

BUT alas! Humane Nature is weak, and we can but rise to a little height generally, in Love to departing and departed Saints; if they are our Friends, if they are related to us, and do us Good. There is much of *Selfishness*, I have confess'd, in it; but yet it is of a pardonable *Selfishness* comparatively. We would hold good Men, good Pastors, and other useful Servants of
GOD,

GOD, if we could, still longer with us, for our Edification and Advantage, as the Disciples of Christ would their Master; tho' GOD calleth them away. We would gladly keep them with us, yet the other term of Time; tho' we keep them out of Heaven, and from their Father. We say, *Not so Lord*; when GOD calleth them to come presently and suddenly. Christ knew, that Humane Nature was thus infirm. Perhaps he felt somewhat of its Propensities this way, strongly working in himself, when he wept at *Lazarus's* Grave. Christ knew, I say it again, that thus infirm Humane Nature was, notwithstanding its reception of the Grace of GOD in some Degree: And therefore he did not bear hard upon his Disciples, nor blame them very sharply, when they sorrow'd at this Time, at the Notice of his going from them to Heaven *.

THE Truth is, such is the Infirmary of the honestest Souls generally, in this World, that they cannot without Difficulty, get above Weeping and Sighs, for the departure of good Men, of good Ministers especially, who they firmly believe are gone to Glory, upon their own Account; upon the Account of the sweet Counsel they took with them; the good Exhortations they receiv'd from them, and the refreshing Consolations which drop'd from their Mouths. But setting aside the Consideration

* Neque suos prosequi luctu Christianis interdictum est. quorum fortitudo non eo spectat, ut illos ferreos aut saxeos reddat, sed fides quam à Scripturis didicerunt, mortem peccati poenam & supplicium esse docet unde sensus & iræ Dei admonet, & Peccatum magis magisque horribile ac detestandum prædicat. Plorabant in Evangelio duæ Sorores Lazari, quamvis neutra earum ignoravit, illum extremo saltem judicij die à mortuis excitandum. Flevit & Christus, qui tamen probe noverat, quomodo ad vitam quam ante quatuor dies deseruerat, esset illum revocaturus. Paulus item quem non latebat, Compendium esse mori, & lucu lento magnoque lucro deputandum esse ut hinc ad Christum solvatur. Per mart Epist ad viduam D. Mart. Bucer.

Consideration of private Losses ; as such good Men and Ministers are a publick Loss to the World, the Church of GOD, the Kingdom to which they belong'd, the Congregations to which they were immediately related, and to others to whom they preach'd with Acceptation and Success, it well becometh the greatest and most perfect Christians, to lament their Departure ; and they shew a Christian Spirit in so doing. Both Ministers and People may well lament the Loss of our deceased Friend, and *your worthy Pastor*, upon these Accounts. Let me speak, with many more who can heartily do it, the Words of *David*, concerning his worthy Friend, and that amiable Soul, *Jonathan*, *2 Sam. i. 16.* *I am distressed for thee, my Brother.*

BUT I cease to encourage Sorrow, where it already prevaieth : I would not quite melt down and overwhelm affected and afflicted Hearts.— Let us proceed to the Third Thing observable from the Words.

III. WE may observe the rational Evidences of Love, which the Flocks of Faithful Pastors ought to shew towards such Pastors, upon their leaving the World. They ought to rejoyce, because they go unto the Father. *If ye loved me*, saith Christ to his Flock, *ye would shew your Love this way, Ye would rejoyce, because I said, I go unto the Father.*

THE Flocks of Faithful Pastors ought to forget themselves in a just and honourable Measure, to lay aside the Sense of their own Necessities and desirable Satisfaction, and to be concern'd about those of their departed Friend and spiritual Father. They ought not to mourn over their own private Loss, ungenerously and unkindly ; but to rejoyce and take pleasure in the Departed's Gain. It becometh them, not to keep on Earth, poring upon what they themselves have parted with ;

with ; but to mount above, and view what their Friend in the LORD hath gain'd. They should rejoyce, That a weary Labourer, is got to Rest ; That One in Labours more abundant, hath received his Reward ; That One that often comforted them, is comforted himself ; That One that pray'd for them, is now Praising ; That that Tongue which preach'd so often the Doctrine of the Lamb, is now singing the Song of the Lamb.— They ought to rejoyce, That One that led them to know GOD, is now enjoying Him ; That One who led them carefully thro' the Wilderness, towards it, is now got into the Possession of the Heavenly *Canaan* himself ; That One that sow'd in Tears, and wept for them, hath now all Tears wip'd away from his Eyes ; That One who liv'd among Strangers and Enemies, is now got home to his Father's House ; That two such Friends are happily met together, as a loving and kind Father, and a loving and dutiful Son.

WOULD not a common Hireling reckon you unkind, and even base-spirited, if you were displeas'd at his receiving his Reward, as soon as his Master is willing to give it him ? And is it not unkind then in you, or may it not justly be reckon'd so, to be disturb'd and afflicted, that your worthy Pastor and Labourer in the Work of the LORD, is call'd by his Gracious Master to receive his Reward, sooner than you expected, or than many others do. Forget yourselves, and your own Wills and Interests a little, and be considerate. Would you have GOD's Sons and Servants stay longer in a banished and distant Estate, than GOD seeth fit ? Would you have 'em put to endure more Labours, more Sufferings, Toils, Trials, than are meet, and all to please you, who yet profess to love them ?

DID

DID not Christ impute it to want of a rational and well-govern'd Love, that his Disciples afflicted themselves, and griev'd at his going away from this Earth? Consider, if the same Defect will not be found in you, if you do not rejoyce in Spirit, at the Thoughts of a Pastor dear to you and dear to God, being remov'd to his heavenly Father's House.

LET me ask you, if I need to do it, Did you not love him? If so; and if Christ's Words be true, you ought to rejoyce at the Removal of him, of whom you have very little Reason to doubt, or any other, That he is gone to a State of Happiness and Joy. — I am not calling you to forget or slight One that hath been faithful to you; to consider him as now in the Grave, and there to leave him: No, I am calling you to remember him after the most friendly manner, to go after his Soul to Heaven, to consider its Joys there, to abide with it in your Thoughts as much as you please, till you arrive there with it. I am calling you to remember your Pastor heroically, Christianly, exaltedly, joyously, charitably, without murmuring at your own Loss. I am even calling you to keep God the Father, and him company, and to hold Communion with both, by Love and Desire of Union with them. I am calling you to think how he is treated in the higher World; to consider how God loveth him and rewardeth him; how *Abraham, Isaac, &c.* welcome him to sit down with them in the Kingdom of Light and Love. I am calling you to go after him in your Thoughts, and see him, where he is better treated, than he was here on Earth: Though saying this, I do not reflect upon you for any Diskindness, or the least Neglect towards him. But alas! what is the greatest Kindness of Men that are evil, when compar'd with the everlasting Kind-

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ness of the GOD of Love? What are all your Endearments to those of *Abraham's* Bosom? What are all your Ministrations and Services to be reckon'd of, which you have shew'd, or could shew, if compar'd with those of Angels and glorify'd Saints, which they shew one to another, in the Land and Kingdom of Love?

I DARE say, I exhort you no otherwise to shew your Love, than he himself would do, could he come again from the World he is call'd to, to speak to you. Were this allow'd, I dare say, he would tell you, He hath found a Father truly Good, Generous and Kind, beyond all that he could declare to you of Him, while cloath'd with Mortality: That tho' he lov'd you, and you him, yet he would not choose to leave his present Mansion, to come again amongst you, to be tempted, tried, contract Sin, and labour with Weariness and Painfulness. We read of one *Tarasius* *, who sorrowing immoderately for his Daughter that was dead, his Brother *Photius* writ to him after this manner: " Suppose, saith he, " thy Daughter should appear to thee, and " taking thee by the Hand, should kiss it, with a " chearful and smiling Countenance, saying, My Father, why dost thou afflict thyself in this manner? " Why dost thou bemoan me, as if I was gone to an " evil State? My Lot is fallen to me in Paradise; a " Place most sweet to behold, and far sweeter to enjoy; but the Experiment exceeds all Belief. Into " this the crooked Serpent cannot wind himself, as he " did into that of our Forefathers. There is none " amongst us, but whose Minds are impregnable, and
C " cannot

* Vid. Epist. 235, Photii. I have given you the Translation of this Part of it, in the Words of an eminent Divine, Dr. Patrick in his Writ-
nesses to Christianity, p. 2.

cannot be overcome by any Artifice ; nor can we
 desire to be gratify'd with any greater Good. We
 are all of us Wise with the Divine Wisdom. Our
 whole Life is a continual magnificent Festival in the
 Enjoyment of infinite and unspeakable good Things.
 Being splendidly cloath'd, we see God in a splendid
 manner, (as far as Man can see Him) and are ra-
 vished with his inexplicable Beauty. — Now while
 I converse with thee, a most mighty Love to these
 Things draws me away, and suffers me not to ex-
 plain the least Part of them. Thou, and my Mo-
 ther, shall one Day come hither, and then confess,
 I have said very little of these great good Things.
 Suppose, saith *Photius*, thy Daughter should after the
 like manner speak to thee, wouldst thou not be
 asham'd to continue thy Lamentations? And if up-
 on a Child's saying these Things, we should grow
 better content, &c. shall we not when our Com-
 mon Creator and Lord crieth, Eye hath not seen,
 nor Ear heard, neither have enter'd into the Heart
 of Man, the Things which God hath prepar'd
 for them that love Him? Ah! we have Reason
 enough, if we believe any thing of the Scripture De-
 scriptions of Heaven and its Joys ; any thing of our
 heavenly Father's House and its Entertainments, to
 conclude, That those gone thither, would (if they
 were allow'd to come back and converse with us) tell
 us, That if we lov'd them rationally and wisely, we
 would rejoyce at the Thoughts of that blessed Estate
 they are enter'd upon, and prepare to follow them thi-
 ther ; not wish them back again with us.

Now from this Text and the Doctrine deliver'd
 from it, we may see,

I. THAT

I. THAT it is the Lot of the Flocks of Christ, their ordinary Lot, to be depriv'd of their Pastors. Jesus Christ's own little Flock experienc'd this Treatment, and it was not dealt with singularly and out of the common Way: All the Flocks and Churches of Christ, that succeeded them, and have been gather'd out of the World since, have had dying Pastors to speak to them, and have been made up of dying People themselves. Truly, you of this Congregation, see Evidences of the Truth of this. You have three Families now amongst you, the Heads of which were your Pastors, and died in the Service and Work of the LORD towards your Souls. You have parted with eloquent, zealous and industrious Guides. Many of you have liv'd under their Ministrations, and over-liv'd their Persons. Think now what Improvement you have made, and what Good there is done upon your Souls, by these Planters and Waterers. Examine, How ready you are to follow them, when the same Call is sent to remove you. You have parted with all of them under the most comfortable Hopes of their *going to the Father*: I pray God for you, and pray you for yourselves, That you may not be lost and eternally separated from such Friends and Guides.

II. WE may see, That it sheweth Love, to sorrow at the departing of a faithful Pastor, because of the Loss we sustain thereby: But it sheweth more exalted and rational Love to turn our Passions into another Strain, and to rejoyce in his Gain and Happiness: *If you loved me, ye, &c.*

IF you in particular, find this hard to do, compare your State and Circumstances with those of Christ's Disciples, at this Time, and see if you may not with

as little Difficulty receive Christ's Word, as they could. Your Loss is great; but theirs was greater. Your Loss is shocking, but theirs was more so: Your Pastor went abroad, and trusted to come back again, to see you, and dwell with you, and labour among you, as formerly, if the LORD would; but he was prevented: GOD would have him come home to Himself, and not return to you. GOD took him away suddenly, 'tis true; but yet by a natural Death and Distemper; whereas these Disciples Pastor, and their and our Common Lord, was to be cut off by the Violence and Persecution of his Enemies. Again, The Times were as bad, and as dangerous to the Church of GOD, in these Apostles Days, as they are now, and more so. The Gospel-Church had more Enemies, in proportion to its Extent, and was in a poorer Estate then, than it is in now. These Disciples had more need, in their own Apprehensions and Opinions, of a longer Abode of their Pastor with them, than you have. Their Pastor was as dear to them, as yours could be to you, to be sure; and yet they must lose him; and Joy, at the same Time, was more their Duty, and would have been a truer Evidence of Love, than Sorrow and Tears. I might add much more, to shew you, that this Duty and Instance of Love towards departing, or departed Pastors, *viz.* Rejoycing that such are going, or gone to the Father, must be an easier Practice to you, than it could be to these Disciples.

It is true, this Ingredient of Sorrow, this Aggravation of your Loss you have felt in your Separation from all the Three Pastors you have parted with, you have not been present with them, when a leaving you, to hear their last Instructive *, Consolatory and Vale-

dictory

* Et nunc me cum primis id male habet, quod morienti non adfuerim, & extrema verba quæ summæ pietatis fuisse non dubito, cum aliis exceperim vide Epist. Pet. Martyr ut supra.

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dictory Words, as Christ's Disciples were with their Pastor and LORD, through the suddenness, or thro' the violence of their Distempers and Death. But you may read the Works of Two of them; you may warm your Hearts at their Heavenly Fire, and beget new Relishes and Tasts of the Things of GOD in your own Spirits, by seeing the Workings of theirs, &c. You may remember the Work and Labour of Love, of all of them in the Ministry. And you may well conceive, what they would have said, and how they would have spoken in your hearing, and to you, had GOD permitted them this Liberty. They would no doubt have professed their Faith, declared their Hopes, and told you where they were a going, as our LORD did his Disciples. They would have recommended Religion to you, and their Doctrine which hath been agreeable to it; and beg'd of you, for your Good, and their Rewards sake, not to lose the Things which they had wrought. They would have Prayed for you, commended Unity, Peace and Order to you, and have committed your precious Souls to the keeping of GOD, and to the Care of Christ, the great Shepherd of the Sheep; who liveth for evermore, hath the Residue of the Spirit, and can raise up other Pastors for you, to perfect what is lacking in your Faith.

3. To repeat it again, and give you Line upon Line, for your Comfort, Consolation and Composure of Spirit; You may see, whither Faithful Ministers, and Faithful People go, when they die, and take Comfort at the Departure of both, even to the Father. One of the most careful and able of Relations, is a Father; One of the tenderest and kindest: And to such a Relation they are gone. Now, we are solicitous about a Child no longer, when we know, it is gone to its Father: We fear not its falling into Danger any longer, when

when we know it is gone to a good One : We afflict not ourselves about it, as wanting any Thing good for it. Well, this is the Case of all Faithful Christians, Ministers and People, thus they are disposed of, when they die. And it being thus with them, let us rejoyce in their Lot. This way remember the State of this your last Pastor, and that of those that went before him from among you, who spoke unto you the same Word of Life ; whose Faith follow considering the End of their Conversation.

I'LL add one Word more ; If you love your departed Pastors, gone to the Father, need I tell you, you'll Comfort, and shew all Respect to their deprived Families, their Widows and Fatherless. These will be countenanced and assisted by you, as Occasion requireth, for their Sakes. But I give these hints only as a little Testimony of Love and Respect ; and leave you to the Aged and more Experienced *, to hear and receive Advice, in the Afternoon, *Job xxxii. 7. Days should speak, and Multitude of Years should teach Wisdom.*

* Dr. Williams.

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